

WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE LOVING OTHERS

- Our **mission** is to *Reach* people in the Name of Jesus; *Disciple* people in the Way of Jesus; *Empower* people in the Service of Jesus.
 - Our **method** is to ensure that everything we do is *Christ Centered; Word Focused; & Ministry Minded*
 - Our **message** is *the Gospel*.
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Hosea 1:1-3:5

INTRODUCTION:

Hosea was a contemporary of Amos in Israel, and of Isaiah and Micah in Judah. Hosea's message is that *Israel* is Jehovah's adulterous wife, repudiated, but ultimately to be purified and restored. But Hosea learned about God's love for Israel through his wife Gomer and how God wanted him to treat her.

DISCUSSION:

Reflect on Your Life

1. What jobs or responsibilities do you have that are "thankless"—in other words, you do them without expectation of reward simply because they must be done?
2. When was it difficult for you to do something that you knew God wanted you to do?

Reflect on the Passage

3. How did Gomer treat Hosea? What did she do?
4. How did Hosea respond to Gomer's actions?

Realize the Principle

Hosea wanted to obey God, but that obedience led him into a heartbreaking situation. God told him to marry a prostitute, that some of her children would belong to other men, and that she would run away from him because she loved adultery. Hosea was asked to go a step even further. The Lord told him, "Go, and get your wife again and bring her back to you and love her, even though she loves adultery." Go . . . get . . . bring . . . love. Hosea's love for Gomer was to be clearly demonstrated by his actions toward her. Our obedience to God may not lead to similar heartbreak, but he probably will bring people into our lives who are difficult to love. But we should love them anyway, through our actions. God's love gives us the strength to love others.

5. Why did God ask Hosea to love Gomer?
6. What excuses could Hosea have made for not loving Gomer?
7. What emotions must Hosea have felt in this process?

Respond to the Message

8. What actions communicate your love to those closest to you? What actions on their part allow you to feel their love?
9. What excuses do people make for deciding not to love others (such as a spouse, a parent, a child, a friend)?
10. How do you expect people to respond when you act in love toward them?
11. What does Hosea's love for Gomer teach us about loving others?
12. What makes people difficult to love?
13. How can you find the strength to love others when you don't feel up to it?

Resolve to Take Action

14. Who is it difficult for you to love (for example, a family member, neighbor, church member, employer)?
15. God says, "Go . . . love." Despite how you feel, what can you do to act in love toward this person?
16. What characteristics could make you unlovable to someone else?

CONCLUSION:

- A. The sinner cannot open the door of hope, only love can
 1. We must reach down to the sinner
 2. It requires no more than what we already have - love.
- B. The sufferings of God opens the door for all of us
 1. The door of salvation is open to all, we need to point the way.
 2. We cannot make our own door of hope through our works
- C. Those to whom God has given hope are called to give hope to others.
 1. We are witnesses of the greatest love.
 2. We are examples to the world of hope in the midst of trouble